**More Powers to RPF**

1923. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railway Protection Force was provided with more powers to deal with crimes on trains and railway premises to make rail travel safe;

(b) whether measures announced in the railway budget have been introduced in the railways for curbing offences like sabotage, damage or destruction of railway property and hurting people; and

(c) if so, the what extent these measures have helped in checking the crimes and robberies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS:

(SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir. Railway Protection Force (RPF) has been entrusted with the responsibilities for better protection of passengers and passenger area (in addition to Railway Property) by the amendments to the Railway Protection ForceAct, 1957 and made responsible for minor offences which affect the passengers and the Railway System under chapter XV of the Railway Act, 1989. RPF has taken up escorting of some trains to supplement efforts of the Govt. Railway Police (GRP) and also supplement security in many stations, so that the GRP (under the State Government) can better focus on serious crimes. The task of escorting of trains is being shared by RPF in*co-ordination with the Govt. Railway Police to make rail travel safe.

(b) and (c) The amendments came in to force with effect from 1st of July, 2004. RPF has taken up escorting of many trains in co-ordination with GRP In July 2004 average of 1,288 trains were escorted daily by RPF. While escorting, RPF staff keep vigil and prevent crimes.

However Sections 150, 151 & 152 of the Railways Act 1989, pertaining to sabotage and related wrecking of/damage to trains and Railway Properties and causing hurt to people etc. are still in the jurisdiction of the Govt. Railway Police (GRP) of the States/Union Territory. The investigation and prosecution of crime under the Indian Penal Code as well as sabotage related cases under the Railways Act, 1989 continue to be with the State Police.

After RPF has started escorting of trains in co-ordination with GRP, there has not been any gruesome or sensational case of crime or robbery in the train escorted by them. The cases of theft of Luggage, Chain snatching, drugging are dealt with promptitude in collaboration with Govt. Railway Police. Due to the efforts of RPF, 29 persons for luggage theft and snatching of Jewellery and one person for drugging were apprehended.

The Railways are closely coordinating with the State Governments for prevention and detection of cases of violent incidents and take the following steps in this regard:—

(i) Periodical coordination meetings right from the RPF Post-Police Station level to the General Manager-Home Secretary level. Whenever there is any flare up in the number and nature of incidents, special meetings are held for better ground level coordination.

(ii) RPF has been supplementing the efforts of the State Government Railway Police by deploying additional staff of RPF/RPSF (Railway Protection Special Force).

(iii) RPF has also taken up escorting of trains in crime-effected areas. Such crime prone areas have been identified on the basis of reports of crime and discussion with State Govt. Police.

(iv) The Railways has also corresponded with concerned Chief Secretaries and Director Generals Police inviting their attention for improving the security scenario over the railways.

(v) Special care has been taken by Railways to provide security to women passengers by organizing Women Squads like Surakshini, Tejaswani, Durgavahani. Such squads regularly check the women compartments to ensure trouble free travel to women passengers.

(vi) Efforts to institutionalize the sharing of actionable intelligence in crime prone States, where the Government Railway Police, RPF officers and Intelligence Officers will meet regularly is being pursued.

All feasible assistance to augment the efforts of the State administrations in tackling violence in trains and railway premises is extended by the Railways.